



GENS UNA SUMUS

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Press Release: Visit by FIDE CACDEC Chairman to Guyana

As Chairman of the International Chess Federation's (FIDE) Commission for Assistance to Chess Developing Countries (CACDEC), I would like to report on the great success I met over the last two days on my visit to Guyana to meet with Minister of Sport, Dr. Frank Anthony, the President of the Guyana Olympic Association Mr. K. A. Juman-Yassin and members of the local chess community.

These meetings could not have been possible without the excellent work of the Reds Perreira Sports Foundation which coordinated the trip and the many meetings.

In the late 1970s Guyana was the leading Chess country in the English Speaking Caribbean. Research shows that Guyana competed in two World Chess Olympiads, Buenos Aires 1978 and Valetta 1980, and hosted a major Caribbean Championships which was won by Cuba.

Attached is a record of Guyana's efforts at Buenos Aires where out of a participation of 66 teams they scored 27 points to tie with Wales, Peru, Japan, Luxembourg and Faeroe Islands in positions 41-46, and Valetta where from 82 teams Guyana tied with Luxembourg and Algeria on 26 ½ points for positions 53-55.

In both cases, considering size and development, these two outings are very reputable performances which contributed to Guyana's top player at the time Mr Maurice Broomes earning an international rating of 2210.

Sadly Guyana's participation in international chess was one of the aspects of life in Guyana which suffered from the tragic economic difficulties of the 1980's.

For the English Speaking Caribbean the absence of Guyana from Chess still represents a major void that contributes to our area being only one in the Americas which has countries not affiliated to FIDE.

As part of a recently announced initiative by FIDE's President, Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, to expand the sport of Chess in those countries which currently are not affiliated to FIDE my trip sought to re-establish ties with the local chess community.

In the meeting with the Guyana Olympic Association, which was attended by President Mr. K. A. Juman-Yassin, General Secretary Mr. Ivor O'Brian, Mr Claude Blackmoor and Garfield Wiltshire, the Association was briefed on FIDE's plans to work with the local chess community to revive the Guyana Chess Federation (GCF) and have it affiliated to the Association. President Juman-Yassin saw no obstacles to affiliation of the GCF once the body have been properly reconstituted and recognized by FIDE.

There were two meetings with Minister Anthony where a number of joint initiatives were discussed. Minister Anthony expressed great interest in establishing a Chess-in-Schools Programme and committed to providing the Trophies for a Schools Championships. On behalf of FIDE Mr. Herbert committed to providing through the Ministry a donation of 200 chess sets to facilitate the launch of the programme.

Minister Anthony also agreed to make available to the GCF a facility which could be used for practice by

players as well as a meeting area in the Sports Hall for hosting of major chess tournaments, the first of which will be an International Ratings Tournament that will see six of Guyana's top Chess Players vying for their FIDE Rating. Through CACDEC Development Funds, Mr. Herbert agreed to cover the travel cost of four FIDE rated players from within the region to participate in the tournament which will see international chess return to Guyana for the first time in over 20 years.

In terms of facilitating the revival of the GCF, Minister Anthony agreed to use his office to convene a General Meeting of all former members of the GCF and interested parties to elect a new Executive Board.

At the suggestion of the Mr Blackmoor from the Guyana Olympic Association, a meeting was also held with Mr. Lance Baptiste of the Guyana Teacher's Union to seek its support in coordinating a Chess-in-Schools Seminar for teachers which was arranged by the Foundation in a short space of time.